

# **Monkshood**

## ***Aconitum columbianum***



Although it may not look it, Monkshood is a member of the Buttercup family, the Ranunculaceae, and therefore closely related to the yellow buttercups and Colorado Columbine also found at Cedar Breaks. Like many members of this family, Monkshood prefers open, wet, meadow soils. Its common name comes from the flower's resemblance to the hoods worn by medieval monks. The hood is actually formed from sepals rather than from the petals that usually make up the colored parts of a flower.

This species occurs throughout the west at higher elevations from British Columbia south to Arizona and New Mexico. Like many other members of its family, plants are extremely poisonous and can kill livestock that eat them. Reputedly, a Monkshood extract was used to poison the water supplies of enemies and tip arrows and spears during ancient wars in Asia and Europe